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Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY S/CCT: EHURWITZ:NWH
APPROVED BY S/CCT: EHURWITZ
AF/E: MR. COOTE
S/S:JHOGANSON
---------- 064000
P 210002Z JAN 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 014276

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: RELEASE OF KAGNEW TWO

REF: ADDIS ABABA 0674

1. IN VIEW OF CONTINUED CAPTIVITY OF KAGNEW III, WE BE-
LIEVE WE SHOULD AVOID PASSING TO EPMG ANY INFORMATION FROM
DEBRIEFINGS WHICH, IF LEAKED, COULD SUGGEST TO ELF OR PLF
THAT RELEASE MIGHT BE AGAINST THEIR BEST INTERESTS.

2. FOR TIME BEING, THEREFORE, EMBASSY SHOULD GENERALLY
CONFINE ITSELF TO FOLLOWING IN BRIEFING THE EPMG:

3. PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS OF BOTH MEN SHOWED THEM TO BE
IN GOOD MENTAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITION. BOTH MEN SAID ELF
ACCORDED THEM VERY GOOD TREATMENT AND MADE NO REAL EFFORT
TO INDOCTRINATE THEM REGARDING ERITREAN INSURGENCY.
THROUGHOUT, THEY WERE ASSURED THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE
HARMED. TO EASE BOREDOM AND SENSE OF ISOLATION MEN WERE
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GIVEN CURRENT ISSUES TO TIME AND NEWSWEEK AND PROVIDED

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RADIO OVER WHICH THEY LISTENED TO BBC, VOA, AND US ARMED FORCES NETWORK.

4. IF EPMG INQUIRES ABOUT INFORMATION OF MILITARY OR

INTELLIGENCE SIGNIFICANCE, YOU SHOULD REPLY THAT DEBRIEFINGS CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE BY US MILITARY, AND DEPARTMENT HAS NOT YET BEEN PROVIDED WITH REPORTS. WE WILL FURNISH EMBASSY WITH REPORTS WHEN RECEIVED AND INDICATE AT TIME WHAT WE THINK CAN BE PASSED TO EPMG. WE ARE ALSO POUCHING ACCOUNTS OF DEPARTMENT OFFICERS' CONVERSATIONS WITH BOWIDOWICZ AND STRICKLAND FROM WHICH PARA THREE ABOVE LARGELY DRAWN.

5. WITH REGARD TO PUBLICITY, BOWIDOWICZ HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT GREAT LAKES NAVAL STATION JANUARY 16 IN WHICH, AS HE TOLD US EARLIER, HE INTENDED TO CONFINE HIMSELF TO HIS OWN REACTIONS TO CAPTIVITY AND PLEASURE AT BEING HOME. WE HAVE NOT SEEN ACCOUNT OF INTERVIEW, WHICH WAS APPARENTLY GIVEN NO PLAY BY NATIONAL MEDIA. STRICKLAND HAS SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT MEET WITH PRESS, ALTHOUGH HIS PARENTS GAVE INTERVIEW FOR BROADCAST BY ORLANDO (FLORIDA) TV STATION. WE KNOW OF NO FURTHER PLANS ON PART OF FORMER CAPTIVES OR FAMILIES TO MEET WITH PRESS. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT RULE OUT FURTHER PUBLICITY, WE BELIEVE THAT FUTURE MEDIA ATTENTION WILL BE LIMITED IF IT OCCURS AT ALL. SISCO

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To: ADDIS ABABA
Type: TE
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